The Social Questions Bulletin

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THE METHODIST FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICE
(UNOFFICIAL)

An organization which rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society; which seeks to replace it with social-economic planning in order to develop a society without class distinctions and privileges.

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SEE IT CLEARLY — SEE IT WHOLE!

The seminar discussions in eight cities on the recent coast-to-coast trip brought into highlight the points of emphasis for preaching and action in the present situation—points that must be understood clearly and faced resolutely.

Why This Recession?

The recent drop in production and employment was the sharpest in the history of the profit-seeking economy. This fact plainly reveals the law of decline—the process of repeated and increasing crises. This drop in production (the '29 drop required a period several times longer) was preceded by a steeper curve in profit taking than even that of the golden Hoover days. Here we see cause and effect. What the profit system sows, that it also reaps. Prosperity is not only followed by depression, but produces it.

Production had to drop because too much of the national income had gone to dividends and interest and too little to wages, salaries and farm income. So there was not enough purchasing power in the hands of the people to provide the mass consumption that mass production requires. The situation reveals the conjunction of a moral and a technical defect. Injustice is also technical inefficiency. Both occur because our economic life is carried on as a struggle for profit, instead of as a cooperative endeavor for human development. Wrong in its end and wrong in its means, the profit-seeking economy proves increasingly to be unworkable.

Unemployment, Then War

The immediate necessity is to raise the relief allowance and to insist upon jobs in place of the dole. This means supporting the demands of the unions and the Workers Alliance at these points. Only the fact that the new CIO unions have performed a semi-public function in doing the preliminary work of registering unemployed members for relief has prevented a much more disastrous situation in certain big industrial cities.

There is an increasing connection between the growing unemployment and the stronger drift toward war. Part of the current that carries all the big industrial nations toward armed conflict is the unemployment situation. An economy that does not solve this problem but chooses to build bigger armaments, naturally becomes a war economy. Our vested interest in war becomes higher with every increase in the armament budget.

The Labor Struggle

Nationally, and locally in most places, the lines taken in the struggle between reactionary AF of L officials and the CIO justify our support of the principle of industrial unionism and demand our action in behalf of the more democratic type of labor organization. The willingness of AF of L officials to make a corrupt alliance with anti-labor employers and their lineup with Big Business against progressive legislation call for our sharp condemnation and opposition. With equal clarity and strength do we support rank and file progress toward labor unity both in the economic and in the political field.

Freedom of the Pulpit

Increasing pressure upon the pulpit from the conservative and reactionary forces both within and without the church is manifest everywhere. The attack from without operates usually through pseudo-patriotic groups. It also manifests itself now through the Roman Catholic anti-Red campaign. Regardless of their personal views, it is clearly the duty of our officialdom to come immediately to the defense of any preacher whose freedom is threatened by an attack

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arising outside our church. This is a question of principle—not of views. Naturally the forces of reaction in this day of change are seeking control of the pulpit. If they get it, all that we have won in separation of Church and State will be lost.

As the struggle between democracy and reaction becomes acute, the forces that seek to hold life back will naturally resort to anti-democratic methods within as well as without the church. Cases increase in which a small committee representing money, whose desire is contrary to the majority of the Board and congregation, are able to bring about a change through continued pressure upon the D S and/or the Bishop. In these situations, unless the matter is brought out into the open and settled democratically, something more is at stake than the future of a preacher or the freedom of the pulpit. If we cannot protect our own freedom, we thereby contribute to the total defeat of democracy. This means that all backstair methods and private proceedings contrary to our discipline and tradition should be exposed both in the local church and on the floor of the Annual Conference, and the administrators who tolerate and participate in them brought to book.

The One Way to Stop War

As war trends increase, the division within the peace forces proceeds. One source of confusion is the unjustified interpretation by their opponents of the boycott and the embargo as punishment, instead of as refusal to participate in the acts of those who are invading other nations. This interpretation reveals an inability to understand that judgment and action can be based on social consequences rather than on assessment of guilt.

There is increasing recognition of the compulsory choice between helping to kill many Chinese and making life harder for some Japanese. Also, since the boycott is a spontaneous movement in many countries, there is likewise increasing recognition of the equally compulsory choice of letting it develop hate and serve the war-makers, or of taking it into channels of future cooperation by the guidance of those who have good will toward the Japanese and desire to help them solve their economic problem.

For those who reject war, the issue in broad terms simmers down to a choice between inaction and economic non-cooperation. Doing nothing leaves the present wars and the present trends to more war to pursue their inevitable course. Economic non-cooperation cuts off our participation with those now waging aggressive war. If it becomes sufficiently wide, and if it is associated with sufficiently intelligent efforts to get at the roots of conflict, it offers us the one way to stop and prevent war.—H. F. W.

YOU CAN HELP THIS DESPERATE SITUATION

In the great industrial cities of the United States where I have been in December, January and February, intense misery and suffering prevail in hundreds of thousands of families.

Steel workers to the total of 224,000 have been thrown out of work completely; 320,000 out of 516,000 automobile workers are unemployed.

Over 5,000 families a week have been applying for relief in Michigan. Women and men have had to stand in lines, blocks long, in front of relief stations in Detroit on zero-cold days.

In Cleveland, where the Mayor estimates that 200,000 are unemployed. relief applicants must wait sometimes two weeks for an interview and then it takes sometimes 5 or 6 days more to determine whether relief shall be given. And when given, it is far from adequate.

It is reported that in Chicago, relief recipients live in "quarters hardly fit for cattle and are subsisting on an amount of food of which the cost per meal is less than that provided for dogs by local animal shelters."

Unemployed, hungry, destitute, evicted from their homes—men and women are becoming desperate.

During the past few weeks in Michigan and Ohio, upon invitation from CIO unions and the Workers Alliances that are organizing the unemployed, I have addressed meeting after meeting of those who, through no fault of their own, have been deprived of the right to work.

Write or Wire Today!

I have urged them, and I now urge the members of the Federation, to bring pressure to bear upon the members of City Councils, County Boards, State Legislatures and Congress itself immediately to appropriate funds for adequate work and home relief.

On the fourth of February, 75,000 persons gathered in Cadillac Square, Detroit, at a United Automobile Workers Union protest meeting and demanded a 100% increase in relief allowances to families and a 50% reduction in rentals. (I supported the calling of their meeting.)

It is imperative here in the United States, if we are adequately to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, that Congress immediately enact a WPA deficiency appropriation of $500,000,000 for use up to July 1st and appropriate $2,000,000,000 for the WPA for the next fiscal year.

Wire your Congressman and Senator today in support of the Schwellenbach-Allen Resolution (HR 176), which declares that work opportunities must be provided

through the federal WPA for all "unemployed workers who cannot find employment in private industry." An effective modern method of meeting the tests of the "Day of Judgment" parable.—C. C. W.

FROM THE FIELD

New Jersey Madness. At a meeting held on December 21 in St. Paul's M. E. Church, Jersey City, George G. Hollingshead protested in the name of his Church the denial of civil liberties in his city. Asserting that the issues in this controversy are not peculiar to Jersey City, that they are nation-wide, in fact world-wide, he said, "When in the heat of local conflicts all channels of free assemblage have been closed to a minority, we hold it a duty on the part of the Church to supply a meeting place for the suppressed group. A free Church cannot long survive the death of a free press, free speech and free assembly. . . . Fully conscious of the seriousness of this issue, I have opened this church building for this meeting and join in this protest. I call upon the city administration to restore civil liberties to the city and to follow the constitutional and democratic method in dealing with industrial conflicts."

Mr. Hollingshead's broadcast ("A Psychiatric Analysis of the Present-Day Madness in Jersey City") over Station WEVD on January 18 attracted wide attention. He calls "conservative" the statement by David G. Wittels in a recent issue of the New York *Evening Post* that at least 54 Protestant ministers, Catholic priests, and Jewish rabbis are on the payroll of the Hague machine in Jersey City and Hudson County.

The Social Service Commission of the Newark Conference has been making an investigation of civil liberties in Jersey City and their report will undoubtedly be presented to the Newark Annual Conference.

The Labor Church of the Air. (Radio Station WMBC, Sunday, 10:30 p.m., Detroit, Mich.). This is a unique institution in the United States, maintained by the Bethlehem M. E. Church of Detroit, under the leadership of its pastor, Owen A. Knox, in cooperation with organized labor.

On Jan. 2, C. C. W. spoke over this station condemning the use of violence by the Ford Motor Company Service Department and citing the specific cases of William Merriweather and Tony Marinovitch, victims of this violence. He concluded:

"We call upon the churches to aid the employees of the Ford Motor Company in their endeavor to organize and to secure a signed collective agreement with the company. We call upon the Ford Motor Company to cease discharging employees because of their membership or activity in, or sympathy with, any labor organization; to reinstate those of its employees discharged for union activities; to sign a collective agreement with the UAW Union, whereby union members may have the right to participate in making the decisions which vitally affect their daily welfare."

Bishop Blake and Detroit Labor. Dr. Ward's report of the testimonial dinner given Bishop Blake in January by the League for the Protection of Civil Rights in Detroit confirms John Marvin's statement in the *Zion's Herald* of Jan. 26. Bishop Blake's speech last fall in which he defended the right of the laboring man to be represented in Detroit's government has made history in the field of religion-and-labor relations. Writes Mr. Marvin:

"Just as the international neutrality act has worked in favor of those nations best prepared when war breaks out, so the neutrality of Detroit's religious leaders has worked in favor of the employer who by tradition and well-entrenched authority had the edge originally on the unions in their battle for recognition. Actually the cloak of neutrality served as a covering for either fear on the one hand or social conservatism on the other. The crisis drew out the Detroit Council of Churches, which made bold to take a definite pro-Fascist stand against the labor slate. The Blake incident has created greater respect for the church among liberal groups that were generally becoming suspicious of the church's prolonged silence and conservative leanings."

Copies of the Bishop's address *(Labor's Stake)* available at 3c a copy through our office.

THE MAIL BAG

Denver Labor College. A folder announcing the spring term session of the Denver Labor College, with its meeting place in Grace Church Community Center, states that this enterprise, sponsored by organized labor, is beginning its eighteenth consecutive year. Edgar M. Wahlberg, pastor, offers the course in Public Speaking, the purpose of which is to "increase the effectiveness of workers in presenting facts and analyzing questions."

Lecture-Studies. Charles J. Bushnell, Professor of Sociology in the University of Toledo, has sent us mimeographed copies of the table of contents and introduction to "Some Basic Questions Facing Americans," given as a series of lecture-studies in Toledo to the Automobile Workers Union; also of a paper on the same general theme presented at the meeting of the American Sociological Society in Atlantic City.

Visualized Problems. C. C. W. writes that the National Forum (820 E. 56th St., Chicago, Ill.) has available at 70c each six folders of "Visualized Problems." The folders contain color charts, factual mate-

rial, suggestive questions and bibliographies, and are, he adds, especially adapted for Sunday School and Epworth League groups.

Japanese Boycott. Perry Hanson, one of our missionary members from China, writes from Taian, Shantung: "In addition to the refusal in America and England to *buy* Japanese goods there may well go the refusal to *sell* gasoline to Japan and that would soon be effective. They just sent three Standard Oil ships to the bottom of the Yangtze River, which is an added reason for action in this matter."

Note the new American League pamphlet, *Why and How to Boycott Goods "Made in Japan"* (5c—available through our office).

Labor Organizer. Douglas Anderson, former Methodist minister, is serving in the ranks of the CIO as organizer in Minneapolis.

The Chicago Meeting. Commenting on the Pre-Council Work Sheet for the United Methodist Council meeting in Chicago, Dr. Edgar S. Brightman raised a question as to the legitimacy of the implied criticism of the M. F. S. S. involved in the reference to "the small but able group of ministers and laymen who expend their major energy, not in the church, but in some political and social scheme for the benefit of mankind." "The fundamental question is not faced," wrote Dr. Brightman, "namely, whether the Church is or should be an end in itself, or a brother and servant to humanity. . . . Justice and brotherliness within the Church and heart-searching regarding the social mission of the Church require far more to be said than appears in this seeming attack on one admittedly small group. when that group is the only reason that thousands of outsiders have for any confidence at all in the Church." Dr. Brightman later writes that he believes the allusion, "in its original intent, not hostile to the M. F. S. S." But the somewhat more than "implied criticism" of a certain Methodist layman named Landon at the Chicago Meeting, makes us wonder.

The Answer Is "Yes." "Does the statement 'unofficial' on your pamphlet *Outline of a Christian Program for Social Change* mean that the Methodist Church as a body does *not* subscribe to your program?" asks Mrs. Louis Nash of Seattle. "I am tremendously interested in such a program regardless of the source, but was even more so while reading the pamphlet, hoping that at last one branch of the Protestant Church was beginning to exhibit some courage in the face of the inescapable challenge to action that the times present. Am I to be discouraged in this hope?"

Practical Appreciation. The Fellowship for Christian Social Action (San Francisco) in its *Social Informat* puts up a good case for the M. F. S. S.: "The most advanced of all denominational groups for the promotion of social study in the churches. . . . The debt which our own and other churches owe to Dr. Ward, Bishop McConnell and Halford Luccock and others of the Federation is too great to be paid." However, a partial payment is suggested: "The modest budget is carried by memberships and a few larger gifts. Regular memberships are $5. The BULLETIN may be had for $1 a year, but of course this amount does not contribute to the work of the Federation."

Incorporation of Unions. "The American Civil Liberties Union opposes legislative proposals providing for compulsory incorporation of trade unions and compulsory publication of financial statements on the ground that similar requirements do not prevail with respect to other voluntary associations. The A. C. L. U. is of the opinion that most of the proposals advanced have been advanced by interests hostile to labor not with the purpose of protecting the public welfare, but with the purpose of restricting the free and legitimate growth of union organization and collective bargaining. The American Civil Liberties Union refers to the able report of the Sub-Committee on Labor Unions of the City Club of New York, dated June 28, 1937, for a statement of the issues involved in these proposals other than the issues of civil liberties." (From Report adopted January, 1938.)

A GOOD PLAN TO FOLLOW

We're still selling *Religion and Public Affairs*, but some 250 volumes remain unsold and that means loss to us.

Up in Connecticut Wayne White, who prepared our February BULLETIN for us, found time likewise to sell 9 copies of The Book. This is how he did it:

"I simply carried around a copy of *Religion and Public Affairs*. I took it with me to a district conference. One minister said he had intended to buy one—yes, he would like to buy this one. I took a copy with me to the dentist's office. He had heard of Bishop McConnell and would read it and give it to his mother. Of a Catholic liberal in town I asked, 'How can we get this book read?' His immediate reply was, 'I'll have my friends read it at 25 cents apiece.' He advanced the two dollars. The Church people *heard it quoted, read about it in the* BULLETIN, *took the hint that it would be a good gift*, and came through nobly. Some could not buy it, but would be glad to chip in toward the cost as they read it. The book when paid for was to be given to a needy Negro or Workers' School in the South. *I simply carried a copy around. And talked about it.*"

DON'T MISS:

Recent Pamphlets:

War in China (A Headline Book), 25c: Foreign Policy Association, 8 W. 40th St., N. Y. C.

Five Years of Hitler, 10c: American Council Public Affairs, 20 Vesey St., N. Y. C.

War Losses to a Neutral, 25c: League of Nations Association, 8 W. 40th St., N. Y. C.

Why the C. I. O.? 10c; *Shall Strikes Be Outlawed?* 15c; *Sit-Down*, 10c: League for Industrial Democracy, 112 E. 19th St., N. Y. C.

Story of the Algic Case: Algic Defense Com., 126 11th Ave., N. Y. C.

Recent Articles:

"Those 'Regulated' British Unions," Huberman: *Nation*, Feb. 19th.

"The Communists and the C. I. O.," Cantwell: *New Republic*, Feb. 23rd.